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ABSTRACT

Institutional research in the community college suffers from lack of fiscal support and trained personnel. The project described here was conceived to enhance the capabilities of 12 people assigned research responsibilities in California community colleges who lacked sufficient training in research design and methodology. The overall plan was to help each participant plan, conduct, and report a single piece of institutional research. Training methods included seven workshops held over a year's time, work with self-instructional materials, and individual contact between participants and trainers throughout the year. The project resulted in seven completed institutional research studies reported at the Junior College Association Research and Development Conference in 1972. Further, eight of the participants were assigned to full- or part-time research responsibility on their home campuses. Abstracts of the completed studies and an example of a full study report are appended. (Author/MJK)

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FINAL REPORT
Project No. 0-1-901
Contract No. OEC-9-71-0020 (057)

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES THROUGH APPLIED RESEARCH

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University of California, Los Angeles
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024

June 30, 1973

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JC 750 450

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IMPROVING INSTRUCTION IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES THROUGH APPLIED RESEARCH

Abstract. Institutional research in community colleges suffers from lack of fiscal support and trained personnel. This project was conceived to enhance the capabilities of people assigned research responsibilities in colleges in California. Twelve trainees met in five two-day sessions and one four-day session, working with self-instructional training materials and discussing research techniques with three trainers. The project resulted in seven completed institutional research studies reported at the California Junior College Association Conference, 1972. Further, eight of the participants were assigned to full- or part-time research responsibility on their home campuses.

The Problem. The community college is the fastest growing segment of higher education in America. Approximately 2.8 million students are enrolled in these institutions, more than 30% of the total college enrollment. California in particular is heavily committed to the community college with more than 800,000 students in 96 community colleges. This is more than all enrollments at all levels in other institutions of higher education in the state. Clearly an important segment of education in America, the community colleges are laboring to find their unique niche. They are neither traditional collegiate education nor secondary schools. Rather they are a new form of institution with problems different from those faced by other types of schools.

The two-year colleges are expanding rapidly and seeking their own identity. They claim to be "teaching institutions", a term that is too often interpreted as "institutions that don't conduct research." The instructors are not obligated to do research nor to publish. Hence, a stance that would encourage faculty members and administrators to pursue and understand the value of research is not prevalent. We are faced with the phenomenon of a rapidly expanding, dynamic institutional form that does not attend to coherent research as part of its mission.

Nor have the community colleges made a significant commitment to institutional research even though they should be looking more introspectively at their operations at a time when resources are becoming more scarce. In 1968 Roueche and Boggs did a national survey of institutional research in two-year colleges. They found a rather minimal commitment to institutional research in terms of the frequency of studies then being conducted with an average of one institutional research study per year per college. Most of these studies were on some aspect of student characteristics, for example, student aspirations, grade point averages, number of hours worked per week, or success in further schooling. The area of least emphasis was instruction. The Roueche and Boggs findings corroborated those of an earlier study done by Swanson (1964) who found that only 19% of the nation's two-year colleges had any type of formal organization for institutional research and that only four colleges of a sample of 337 had persons assigned full time to institutional research.

In addition to collecting data about the level of institutional research then being conducted, these surveys also attempted to determine the reasons why institutional research was not more prevalent. High among the reasons given was a "shortage of qualified personnel." Many respondents excused their failure to engage in research because they did not have appropriately trained research workers on their staff. Those colleges which were conducting studies typically assigned the responsibility to a counselor or dean who had little training in or understanding of research methodology.

The project reported herein developed out of the need to alleviate the problem of the paucity of trained researchers in community colleges in California. More specifically it stemmed from a meeting of the California Junior College Association, Research and Development Committee, at which representatives of the UCLA Danforth Program on the Junior College were in attendance. After recognizing that the major barriers to a successful institutional research program in the community college were adequate finance and supporting services and the lack of trained researchers, the group decided to make an attack on the latter problem.

Most junior colleges in California had at that time assigned research responsibility to some person on the staff but that person typically had not been trained in research techniques. Frequently he was a part-time researcher who had major responsibilities elsewhere in the administrative hierarchy. His budget for research was negligible and he had no coherent plan of action for conducting series of continuing studies. His designs were skimpy, his methodologies frequently faulty even in the most elementary terms, and his influence negligible. There were a few exceptions--California junior college institutional researchers with well-designed programs--but most practitioners were conducting studies hardly consistent with the designation, "Institutional Research."

Accordingly, the UCLA Danforth Program agreed to take the lead in a project that would increase the competence among a portion of the people assigned research responsibilities in California community colleges and correspondingly to stimulate interest in institutional research among that group of colleges.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Trainers and Participants. The project director, M. Stephen Sheldon, selected two co-directors for this project. The first was Ben Gold who is Director of Institutional Research at Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles, California. Dr. Gold received his graduate degree from UCLA and has been a member of the research and development committee for five years. During that tenure he served as its chairman. He is known throughout the state and much of the country as being among the most knowledgeable and expert research directors in the junior college. Dr. Gold also served as President of the Southern California Institutional Research Association and was selected as the Region IX representative for the CORD Training in Oregon.

The second director was Tom MacMillan. Dr. MacMillan finished his graduate training at the University of California, Berkeley, and served during the academic year 1971-72 as chairman of the Research and Development Committee of the California Junior College Association. He was Director of Institutional Research at Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara, California.

The co-directors decided to keep the number of participants in the research training workshops small--twelve colleges and alternates were chosen because they evidenced interest in institutional research but had not trained personnel to fill the positions. The presidents of the colleges listed below were contacted. Of these eight agreed to send a candidate for potential responsibility in carrying out institutional research:

Mt. San Antonio College
Antelope Valley College
Grossmont College
Los Angeles Southwest College
College of the Sequoias
Cypress College
Long Beach City College
Southwestern College
Los Angeles Pierce College
Compton College
Moorpark College
Rio Hondo College

For the colleges who could not participate alternates were selected on the same basis. A list of the 12 participants and their colleges appears below:

George Becker, Long Beach City College, Long Beach
John Buller, Golden West College, Huntington Beach
Florin Caldwell, De Anza College, Cupertino
Robert J. Cook, Los Angeles Southwest College
Fred Horn, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego
William Jay, Moorpark College, Moorpark
Don L. Jenkins, Rio Hondo College, Whittier
Dean G. Klampe, San Diego Community Colleges, San Diego
James R. Lagerstrom, Los Angeles Pierce College, Woodland Hills
Albert J. Landini, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles
Frank C. Roberts, Antelope Valley College, Lancaster
Donald H. Sewell, Compton College, Compton

Training Procedures. The trainers were faced with the task of helping develop institutional research skills in twelve bright, experienced men with great naivete in research. The overall plan was to help each man plan, conduct and report a single piece of institutional research. Each would be encouraged to deal with a real problem on his own campus, preferably one having to do with development or evaluation of instruction. The original plan was to hold seven two-day meetings and for the

trainers to maintain contact with the participants by phone and correspondence throughout the year.

The two overall objectives were: (1) to increase the research competence of the participants and (2) to conclude the sessions with each participant having completed a reasonably meaningful piece of research on this campus. The specific objectives appear below:

1a. To familiarize the participants with research designs, techniques and methods of proven value in attacking educational problems.

1b. To enable participants to identify researchable problems and to formulate them in terms amenable to research design and analysis.

1c. To enable participants to select and use designs, techniques, and methods appropriate to their problems.

1d. To enable participants to collect, analyze, and interpret data appropriate to their problems.

1e. To acquaint participants with a variety of sources of information relevant to their problems.

1f. To provide opportunity for mutual interchange of ideas about promising research approaches to complex problems confronting each participant in his own college.

1g. To inspire cooperative junior college attacks on complex problems.

2a. To produce meaningful research related to one of the more common and persistent problems in the junior college.

2b. To identify and assign individual projects within the categories above to participants.

2c. To provide advice and assistance to each participant in conducting his research and preparing a report of his findings.

2d. To pool and interchange research findings and make recommendations designed to improve instruction in communication skills.

The Workshops. First meeting. Participants in attendance were:

Florin Caldwell	De Anza College
Jim Lagerstrom	Los Angeles Pierce College
Max D. Bell	Mt. San Antonio College
Frank C. Roberts	Antelope Valley College
Ben Gold	Los Angeles City College

Robert J. Cook	Los Angeles Southwest College
Tom MacMillan	Santa Barbara City College
George Becker	Long Beach City College
William Jay	Moorpark College
Steve Sheldon	UCLA

This meeting was held on May 21 and 22, 1971 on the campus of UCLA. The first group activity was introductions and general plans. It was agreed that the second and possibly subsequent meetings were to be held at the Francisco Torres Conference Center in Goleta, California. The remainder of Friday was spent in familiarizing the participants with specific resources on campus. More explicitly they received a long briefing on the campus computing network for data processing and a second hour on the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges.

On Saturday, May 22, RED TRAIN materials (self-instructional research training aids) were distributed to the participants and trainers and the general concepts of research design were discussed. During the second part of the Saturday meeting each participant made a tentative decision concerning the area in which he would conduct his research.

Second Meeting. This meeting was held on July 21-24, 1971 at the Francisco Torres Conference Center. Attendants were:

Jack Crawford	American Institute of Research, Palo Alto
Ben Gold	Los Angeles City College
Tom MacMillan	Santa Barbara City College
James Lagerstrom	Los Angeles Pierce College
Don Sewell	Compton College
Don Jenkins	Rio Hondo College
Al Landini	Los Angeles City College
John Buller	Golden West College
Fred Horn	San Diego Mesa College
Frank Roberts	Antelope Valley College
William Jay	Moorpark College
George Becker	Long Beach City College
Florin Caldwell	De Anza College
Dean Klampe	San Diego Community College District
Steve Sheldon	UCLA

For this four-day meeting each participant was to have firmed up his area of research and made tentative plans to carry out the research. At this meeting we had the assistance of a secretary so that a draft copy of the research proposals could be ready for review by the last day of the meeting. Interspersed with the decisions and research planning were individual and group work with the RED TRAIN materials.

On the morning of July 24 twelve proposals were produced and each was reviewed by the group with the assistance of Jack Crawford of the American Institute of Research.

The dates for the remaining meetings were discussed in detail. Decisions were made so the participants could receive direct help from the group and the trainers at critical points in their training. These dates were October 15 and 16, the data collection period; February 25 and 26, the data analysis period; March 24 and 25, the report writing and editing period and finally, the last meeting to be coincidental with the California Junior College Association Research and Development Conference in San Diego, May 3-5. It was further decided that all future meetings except the last would be held at the Francisco Torres Conference Center.

Third Meeting. The third meeting, October 15 and 16, 1971 was held at the Francisco Torres Conference Center. Attendants were:

Steve Sheldon
Ben Gold
Tom MacMillan
George Becker
Florin Caldwell
William Jay
Dean Klampe
James Lagerstrom
Albert Landini
Frank Roberts
Don Sewell

This meeting was devoted to assisting the participants in data collection and recording procedures. It was at this meeting that participants had the first taste of dealing with dirty and missing data. The calamities of depending on counselors and clerks to collect data became evident. The reticence of faculty and administration to give data was apparent. There was a great deal of relieving anxieties as the participants shared with each other the minor disasters that are part of any real-world research effort. However the cooperative and supportive feelings of the group did much to mitigate fears and enthusiasm continued.

Fourth Meeting. February 25 and 26, 1972, Francisco Torres Conference Center. Attendants were:

Steve Sheldon
Ben Gold
Tom MacMillan
George Becker
Florin Caldwell
William Jay
Dean Klampe
James Lagerstrom
Albert Landini
Frank Roberts
Don Sewell

By the time of this meeting most of the participants had completed or partially completed their data collection and the two-day session

was devoted to data analysis techniques. For part of these meetings small groups were formed on the criteria of data analysis procedures. The primary procedures dealt with were: (1) significance of difference between means (T tests and F ratios); (2) correlational and multiple correlation procedures.

Fifth Meeting. March 24 and 25, 1972, Francisco Torres Conference Center. Attendees were:

Steve Sheldon
Ben Gold
Tom MacMillan
James Lagerstrom
Don Sewell
Don Jenkins
Albert Landini
Frank Roberts
William Jay
George Becker
Florin Caldwell
Dean Klampe

Since data analysis had been completed by many of the participants this meeting was partially concerned again with data analysis. A second portion was spent in reviewing tentative first drafts of project reports. Assurance was given all participants that the trainers would be available on request to help with data analysis and report writing.

Sixth Meeting. May 3-5, 1972, San Diego. California Junior College Association and Development Conference. Attendees were:

Steve Sheldon
Ben Gold
Tom MacMillan
George Becker
Florin Caldwell
William Jay
James Lagerstrom
Albert Landini
Frank Roberts
Donald Sewell
Dean Klampe
Don Jenkins

The group met together briefly for the last time on May 3. Seven of the participants presented their papers to the conference at a specially scheduled paper session.

RESULTS

At the outset it was hoped that this project would supply California community colleges with twelve people who had some sophistication and a great deal of enthusiasm for junior college institutional research

work. It was hoped that twelve pieces of institutional research would be accomplished at the colleges. Overall only partial success can be claimed. Three of the initial twelve participants were forced at some time during the year to withdraw. The reasons were: (1) Robert Cook of Los Angeles Southwest College, a temporary appointment with the Office of Education for the year; (2) John Buller of Golden West College, an appointment at his home campus as Department Head; (3) Fred Horn of San Diego Mesa College, started with the group late and felt frustrated in firming up his research proposal.

The remaining nine are evidence of partial to complete success. Of the twelve initial participants, seven completed their studies and presented them to the CJCA R & D Conference. Five submitted their reports to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges. The seven completed studies are listed below.

George Becker, Long Beach City College, AN EVALUATION OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ENGLISH COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

Florin Caldwell, De Anza College, STUDY OF OBJECTIVES FOR ENGLISH 1A CLASSES

William Jay, Moorpark College, DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTIPLE REGRESSION EQUATION TO PREDICT STUDENT DROP RATE AND CHANGE TO OTHER MAJOR RATE--THE DIFFICULTIES AND POSSIBILITIES

James R. Lagerstrom, Los Angeles Pierce College, AN EXPERIMENTAL TEST OF THE EFFECT OF AUDIO PLAYBACK OF STUDENT SPEECHES UPON STUDENT ATTITUDE AND SPEECH IMPROVEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSES AT PIERCE COLLEGE

Albert J. Landini, Los Angeles City College, AN EX POST FACTO NEEDS ASSESSMENT USING A MODIFIED DELPHI TECHNIQUE TO DETERMINE THE GOALS OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

Frank C. Roberts, Antelope Valley College, ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS OF PLACEMENT EXAM SCORES ON GRADING PRACTICES: A THWARTED ESOTERIC STUDY

Donald H. Sewell, Compton College, COMMUNITY COLLEGE DROP-OUTS: THE INSTRUCTOR AS A VARIABLE

Abstracts of these studies are appended hereto.

Of the remaining five, two developed a study to be completed at some future date. These were:

Don L. Jenkins, Rio Hondo College, GENERAL BIOLOGY

Dean G. Klampe, San Diego Community Colleges, ATTITUDINAL CHANGES OF DROP OUTS

Of the participants listed on the previous page three have been assigned to full time institutional research at their college. These are: George Becker, Long Beach City College; Florin Caldwell, De Anza College; Jim Lagerstrom, Pierce College. Three have been assigned part time institutional research. These are: William Jay, Moorpark College; Frank Roberts, Antelope Valley College; Don Sewell, Compton College. Dean Klampe of San Diego Community College was already in the Research Office in his district. Albert Landini is doing contract institutional research work in the Los Angeles Community College District. These assignments are the most powerful evidence of the success of the project.

The specific objectives listed as 1a through 1f were accomplished in the workshops. Discussions, self-instructional training materials, and consulting with trainers served this purpose.

The attainment of objective 1g is evidenced by the Southern California Institutional Research Association's applying for funding to conduct research on problems common to several campuses. This association is comprised of alumni of the project described here, along with other community college personnel.

The attainment of the objectives listed as 2a through 2d was revealed in the completion of seven research reports.

There are also in every project such as this outcomes which do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis or even nominal scaling. These are the outcomes that are known through spontaneous letters and through conversation and stories. Without exception, all the trainers and participants finished this project with additional enthusiasm for research and further with comradery with other institutional research workers. The project director received 4 letters suggesting a "reunion" of the group. Many of the participants have joined local institutional research groups and are now encouraging further training for more people.

APPENDIX

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ERIC REPORT RESUME

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AUTHOR
Becker, George

TITLE
An Evaluation of an Innovative Approach to English Composition Instruction. Phase One.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
CIQ43040	
SP. AG. COD	SPONSORING AGENCY

EDRS PRICE	CONTRACT NO.	GRANT NO.
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JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
9p.

DESCRIPTORS
*Junior Colleges; *English Instruction; *Writing Skills; *Composition Skills (Literary); *Autoinstructional Programs; Evaluation

IDENTIFIERS

ABSTRACT
In an attempt to improve student preparedness for entry into transfer-level freshman English composition, the English department of Long Beach City College (California) inaugurated a new program to improve writing skills. In the past, students who demonstrated a deficiency in their command of English usage, by low achievement on a standardized English placement test, had to satisfactorily complete a course reviewing English essentials before enrolling in transfer-level freshman English composition. The new program fulfills the review course requirement but emphasis is placed on writing compositions rather than upon reviewing English grammer, punctuation, and fundamentals. Small discussion groups, and auto-tutorial instructional programs are used to assist students in correcting errors that hinder effective written communication. It was judged that the program's effectiveness should be evaluated before its regular adoption by the college. Use of "t" tests for means and proportions were employed to seek out pertinent significant differences between the new program and the existing traditional one. Data analysis revealed no significant differences between the two groups (.05 level) as to achievement grades, penalty grades, and Cooperative English Expression Test scores following completion of the programs. (AL)

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AUTHOR
Gulassa, Cyril M.; Caldwell, Florin L.

TITLE
Phase One: Study of Objectives for English 1A Classes. Transfer Level Composition at De Anza College.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
CIQ20495	

SP. AG. CODE	SPONSORING AGENCY

EDRS PRICE	CONTRACT NO.	GRANT NO.
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REPORT NO.	BUREAU NO.

AVAILABILITY

JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
26p.

DESCRIPTORS
*Junior Colleges; *Course Objectives; *Composition Skills (Literary); *English Instruction; *Evaluation; Values; Reading Skills; Writing Skills; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes

IDENTIFIERS
California

ABSTRACT
In order to evaluate the transfer-level English composition program at De Anza College (California), English composition teachers and students rated 80 objectives in the categories of composition, values, reading, and writing. Objectives were rated on a one-to-five scale. Each objective was ranked as primary, secondary, or optional, according to faculty rating. For the primary objectives, comparisons were made between instructor emphasis and student helpfulness. Conclusions were reached in each area: (1) composition--students receive more help in acquiring structural skills than thought skills; (2) values--teachers placed strong emphasis on understanding oneself and one's relationship to others; (3) reading--teachers' main objective was the need to teach students to read with greater understanding; and (4) writing assignments--only in this area was there a high level of congruence, probably due to the emphasis on procedures rather than skills. (RN)

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AUTHOR
Lagerstrom, James R.

TITLE
An Experimental Test of the Effect of Audio Playback of Student Speeches Upon Student Attitude and Speech Improvement in the Public Speaking Classes at Pierce College.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
BBB02155	
SP. AG. CODE	SPONSORING AGENCY

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JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
22p.

DESCRIPTORS
*Junior Colleges; *Speech Instruction; *Speech Skills; *Instructional Aids; *Self Evaluation; Tape Recorders; Comparative Analysis; Student Attitudes; Instructional Media

IDENTIFIERS

ABSTRACT
The presumption that increased media utilization yields better results was tested at Los Angeles Pierce College (California). To study the effect of media on the learning and attitudes of students in the public speaking (Speech I) class, two matched groups of 41 subjects were treated identically, except that the experimental group used tape recorders to record their speeches for self-evaluation. At the end of the semester both groups were evaluated by three college speech teachers, and the experimental group of students completed questionnaires designed to reveal their attitudes toward their own speaking, their improvement in speech, the course, and the audio playback technique. Conclusions reached indicated that the audio playback of student speeches was of some value in improving student attitude toward the course, the students' specific vocal skills, and the students' ratings of themselves. Audio playback had no noticeable effect on students' attitudes toward either their own speaking or their improvement in speaking. (Author/RN)

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AUTHOR
Landini, Albert J.; Gold, Ben K.

TITLE
An Ex Post Facto Needs Assessment Using a Modified Delphi Technique to Determine the Goals of a Community College Learning Resources Center.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
CIQ43195	

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JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
34p.

DESCRIPTORS
*Junior Colleges; *Educational Objectives; *Evaluation; *Evaluation Techniques; *Instructional Materials Centers; Learning Laboratories; Autoinstructional Laboratories; Institutional Research; Teacher Attitudes

IDENTIFIERS
Delphi Technique

ABSTRACT
A modified use of the Delphi technique to determine institutional goals for a community college learning resources center is described in this report. A committee of faculty and staff acted as "selected experts" in determining the initial goal statements. Processes and techniques for collapsing the large number of goal statements to a few detailed positive and negative goal statements are presented. The positive goal areas derived were: (1) small student discussion groups; (2) better learning environment; (3) better instruction; (4) individualized instruction; and (5) better organizational structure. Negative goal areas derived were: (1) faculty overload; (2) administrative misuse; (3) lack of small student discussion groups; and (4) dehumanization of students. These goals in their final statement forms were derived in view of the perceived purpose of the learning resources center as allowing the community college to respond to increasing student enrollments in the face of diminishing revenues without lowering the quality of education offered. The methodology used to bring about goal convergence is reported in a step-by-step manner so that interested researchers wishing to replicate the study at their institution may do so, and a brief literature review describes some possible applications of Delphi in other areas of education. (AL)

OE FORM 6000, 2/69

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AUTHOR
Roberts, Frank C.

TITLE
Analysis of Effects of Placement Exam Scores on Grading Practices: A Thwarted Esoteric Study.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
	Antelope Valley Coll., Lancaster, Calif.

SP. AG. CODE	SPONSORING AGENCY

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REPORT NO.	BUREAU NO.

AVAILABILITY

JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
18p.

DESCRIPTORS
*Junior Colleges; *Statistical Analysis; *Grading; *College Entrance Examinations; *Grade Point Average; Placement; Comparative Analysis

IDENTIFIERS

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of entrance examination scores, used for placement, on grading practices of teachers at Antelope Valley College (California). Correlations between students' GPA and their entrance exam scores were calculated. These were compared with correlations between grades given by 10 instructors and the students' entrance exam scores to determine whether prior knowledge of a student's score on the entrance exam had any effect on the instructor's grading practices. It was concluded that among the sample teachers studied, there was little, if any, effect. (RN)

MOORPARK COLLEGE

Research Study

Development of a Multiple Regression Equation to Predict Student Drop Rate and Change to Other Major Rate-- The Difficulties and the Possibilities

Bill Jay

April, 1972

Introduction and Purpose. During the spring semester of 1971, Moorpark College undertook participation in the Applied Research Training Program funded by the U.S. Office of Education and directed by M. Stephen Sheldon of the UCLA Danforth Junior College Program. The purpose of the program was to upgrade the research abilities of junior college staff members, as well as produce research relevant to junior college programs. Moorpark College has always been concerned with students who drop out of school or who change majors. It was suspected that the past performance (GPA) of students might be a good indicator of drop rates. However, there might be other contributing factors such as the influence of instructors or counselors, employment opportunities or perceived employment opportunities, the interest of the student, the way a student got into the major itself, the age of the student, etc. In regard to change of major, some of these factors were definitely suspected to be influential. The plan was not to find out what the percentages were of what type of student had done what in the past. The purpose of the study was to determine what factors might be used as predictors to indicate whether a student was likely to change majors or drop from school. This would be done by taking a starting group of students and determining what factors applied to them before they started classes.

Methods. As each new student went through registration, he was given a questionnaire to complete. Two hundred and forty-five of these questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire asked yes or no and multiple choice questions on the reasons a student picked a major and who had influenced him. It also covered such factors as financial resources, future plans, present employment, perceived employment opportunities in his major, etc.

All of these responses were punched on IBM cards. In addition to the raw scores from the questionnaire, such factors as name, sex, high school last attended, counselor, high school GPA, major during fall semester, major during spring semester, whether dropped or not, and age were punched on the cards. Raw score means and standard deviations were calculated for both part-time and full-time students. Correlation coefficients for each variable with every other variable as well as drop and change were computed. Then, multiple R, R square, and standard error for each additional combination of variables, as well as the variables and constants in each individual multiple regression equation, were derived.

Conclusions--The Possibilities and the Difficulties. This was a pilot study to determine the possibility of developing multiple regression equations to predict change of major rate and drop rate. Any pilot study is likely to disclose some of the difficulties one can anticipate in any major study to follow.

The first difficulty that reared its ugly head was the error in sampling. This was not a random sample. It was taken during the last half of the registration period and was possibly even concentrated in the latter part of this time block. This probably accounts for the high drop rate since there is some evidence that late registrants are more drop prone than other students.

The second difficulty was the instrument itself. The questionnaire involved several hours of preparation but had some questions that students obviously didn't understand. The format was not perfect and some students did not reply to all questions. This meant that some questions had to be excluded from the study and others with skipped responses may have skewed results.

Thirdly, the registration procedures did not lend themselves well to the insertion of a questionnaire. This seriously cut sample size.

The possibilities indicated in this pilot study, however, are intriguing. The observation that the very high correlation we found in the smallest sample was not surprising, but was one of the main reasons that we suspected it and chose to ignore it. However, the multiple regression equations derived for full-time students with a much larger sample indicate that both drop and change of major rates may be predictable to some extent. Furthermore, this prediction may be possible by simply asking students about themselves with an instrument similar to the one used in this study. A much larger sample with an improved and simplified questionnaire will be applied to any major study attempted. Needless to say, cross validation will be used.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DROPOUTS: THE INSTRUCTOR AS A VARIABLE

Presented by

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at

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE DROPOUTS - THE INSTRUCTOR AS A VARIABLE

NOTE: This research study is not complete, but it does point out some important considerations for future research in this area. The emergence of new faculty evaluation procedure in California may make it even more appropriate for further investigation.

Because of the sensitive nature of some of the materials in this study, an attempt has been made to conceal the identity of the college. The college is referred to as The Community College. The names and other identifying titles of persons connected with the college were deleted.

INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted at a California Community College, which enrolls approximately 6000 students, in day and evening classes. The average dropout rate from academic classes there was 33.5 percent during the semester in which the study was conducted. The question is asked: Why do some classes lose from 46 to 80 percent of their students, while comparable classes are below average in their student loss? If the classes are comparable in every way, then the instructor stands out as a probable variable in determining the dropout rate. We wished to determine whether there was a detectable difference in attitude between these two groups of instructors. The attitudes to be measured were: toward self; toward others; toward students at that college; toward education; and toward the value of education.

PROCEDURE

Two groups of instructors were to be identified--one with a high dropout rate, and one with a low dropout rate. After the Spring Semester of 1971, the two groups of instructors were selected from a computer printout, which indicated beginning enrollments and number of withdrawals, along with grade distribution, section number and other data relating to the classes. Pairs of instructors in

subject areas were selected using the following criterion:

- they must have taught the same course
- they must have had at least 25 students starting the class
- they must have had a difference in dropout rate of at least 25 percentage points

Using this criterion the following pairs were selected:

Instructor #	Subject	Day	Time	Percentage Dropout
*1 H	English 1A	TTh	8-9:30	80%
1 L	English 1A	MWF	11-12	29%
2 H	English 1B	TTh	1-2:30	63%
*2 L	English 1B	MWF	8-9	11%
3 H	English 1B	W	7-10pm	55%
3 L	English 1B	T	7-10pm	11%
*4 H	English 10B	MWF	2-3	46%
4 L	English 10B	TTh	8-9:30	19%
*5 H	History 11	MWF	10-11	54%
5 L	History 11	MWF	1-2	25%
6 H	Math 1	TTh	2-3:30	60%
*6 L	Math 1	MWF	9-10	24%
*7 H	Math 9	M-F	9-10	55%
7 L	Math 9	M-F	1-2	30%
*8 H	Psych. 1A	M	7-10pm	49%
*8 L	Psych. 1A	T	7-10pm	12%
*9 H	Speech 2	MWF	10-11	68%
9 L	Speech 2	MWF	1-2	30%

*Indicates that this instructor returned the completed attitude scales.

Four attitude scales were selected from the text "Scales for the Measurement of Attitudes" by Shaw and Wright. The four scales were:

1. Exhibit 8-18 - Scale to Measure Attitude toward Defined Groups. This scale was used to measure attitudes toward The Community College's students. A combination of Forms A and B was constructed so as to eliminate items which obviously referred to national groups.

2. Exhibit 9-6 - Acceptance of Self and Others
   This scale is really two scales, one to measure attitude toward self and one to measure attitude toward others. It was used as it appears in the text.

3. Exhibit 3-15 - Opinionnaire on Attitudes toward Education.
   This scale measures attitudes toward student-centered policies in education. It was used as it appears in the text, except that where the words "boys and girls," "teachers" or "pupil" appeared, the words "students," "instructor" or "student" were substituted.

4. Exhibit 6-1 - The Education Scale
   This scale measures positive attitudes toward the value of education. It was used as it appears in the text, except that the word "high school" was replaced by the word "college" in appropriate items.

These scales were duplicated and a copy of each was placed in a large envelope. A letter addressed to the instructor was clipped to the outside of the envelope (see Appendix A), and the entire package was placed in the instructor's mailbox. This first distribution took place on October 12, 1971. By October 29, only six sets of scales had been returned. A memo was then sent to all of the instructors. (See Appendix B) By the middle of December, a total of seven sets had been returned. The Dean of Instruction then sent memos to the instructors who had not returned their scales. (See Appendix C) New copies of the scales were also sent at this time. By January 21, 1972, the number of completed scales returned had reached nine.

After consulting other persons involved in institutional research, it was decided to directly approach those instructors who had not returned their scales. The reaction to the researcher's verbal appeal varied somewhat from instructor to instructor, but all indicated that they would not complete the scales. Most feared that the results would be made public, or would be used against them. In particular, some were concerned about the scale measuring attitudes toward The Community College students, due to the generalizations that were necessary in order to answer it. Others declared that they were "philosophically opposed" to the questionnaires, that they "couldn't take the chance" of answering them, or that they weren't "good at doing that sort of thing." Although they were assured that they would not be identified, the instructors in some cases seemed fearful and hostile. The instructors might be aptly described as being "up tight". A variable not yet mentioned might account for some of this "up tight" behavior. That is, the college's student

body is predominantly Black, but all of the instructors in the study were White.

FINDINGS

Although the data is not complete, and no statistical test can be run, we believe that there are at least three observations that deserve further mention. As with most research, the value is not in the proof or disproof of a theory (for we rarely get clear proof or disproof), but in the questions that are raised, and the further inquiries that are generated.

The first observation that may be of interest is the small amount of data that was collected. The data is presented for interest only, since the sample is not large enough, nor is the pairing adequate, to permit comparisons between the two groups. However, it might point toward further research in this area. The data did seem to be developing into something that would have been significant, and most interesting.

Test I - Attitude Toward The Community College Students

Possible Range of Scores: 4 - 109

A high score indicates a favorable attitude toward the group in question.

Low/DO Instructors		High/DO Instructors	
89		82.5	
87.5		80	
	M = 88	61	M = 56
		40	
		36	
		36	
		0*	

*Instructor returned this test without responding.

Test II - Acceptance of Self

Possible Range of Scores: 36 - 180

A high score indicates a favorable attitude toward self.

Low/DO Instructors		High/DO Instructors	
167		169	
144		166	
	M = 156	151	M = 144
		136	
		128	
		126	
		126	

Test III - Acceptance of Others

Possible Range of Scores: 28 - 140

A high score indicates a favorable attitude toward others.

Low/DO Instructors		High/DO Instructors	
130		123	
115		121	
	M = 122	108	M = 105
		107	
		106	
		86	
		86	

Test IV - Attitude toward Student-Centered Policies in Education

Possible Range of Scores: 0 - 50

A high score indicates more favorable attitudes toward student-centered policies in education.

Low/DO Instructors		High/DO Instructors	
44		47	
44		47	
	M = 44	40	M = 40
		39	
		37	
		37	
		35	

Test V - Attitude toward the Value of Education

Possible Range of Scores: 22 - 110

A high score indicates a positive attitude toward the value of education.

Low/DO Instructors		High/DO Instructors	
84		104	
80		102	
	M = 82	102	M = 89
		86	
		78	
		76	
		73	

The second observation that needs further inquiry is what we have called the "uptight" instructor. Out of 18 instructors, only nine returned the scales. Is there a general lack of cooperation, or fear of research, or mistrust of administration, on the part of the instructors? Or does the racial issue in this particular instance overshadow other variables and cause the "uptight" behavior? None of the instructors questioned complained of the time required to complete the scales, which might have been a factor in some situations. But these instructors had plenty of time, had they been willing to cooperate.

The third, and most important, question raised by this study is: What causes us to be able to obtain such a sample in the first place? That is, why do some instructors have such high dropout rates, in comparison to others teaching similar classes? The average dropout rate for the "high" group was 59%, while the average rate for the "low" group was 21%. The reasons for this difference ought to be investigated.

Everyone who has gone through college, and worked out their schedules, know that with instructors there are the good ones and the bad ones, the hard ones and the easy ones, the mean ones and the kind ones. Should these judgments be accepted as fact without an attempt at uniform education, or should everyone close his door, do his own thing, and leave the students relying on luck to get them through the system? Academic freedom has closed the door on inquiry up to this time. Perhaps faculty evaluation, which is upon us, will help open some doors and lead to new communication on course requirements and performance expected.

Perhaps the wide variance in dropout rate points more to differences in philosophy than differences in temperament, although the two are not necessarily unrelated. The reaction of some "high dropout" instructors to a questioning of their record is: "Good--a high dropout rate shows that I'm not lowering my standards and that I am doing the weeding out job that I perceive as being my duty." The "low dropout" instructor may feel that it is his duty to hold onto as many students

as possible, and therefore he bends in order to serve the students that he finds before him. There is good argument, we feel, on both sides of this issue. All parties must come together and decide what the standards are to be, and how we can hold students, and what the philosophy of the Community College, and therefore its employees, is going to be.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is important that the instructor as a variable in determining student success be investigated. This project attempted to identify that variable, and although it was not successful, it did define the problem more clearly. There is reason to believe that the instructor's philosophy, his temperament and perhaps his attitudes, influence whether or not a student stays in college. Surely there are ways to make changes in our system so that students know what is expected of them, and how they are going to be treated, before they enter the classroom. Leadership from the top should take us back to the "Open Door", and away from the "Revolving Door". A step in that direction would be to look closely at the philosophy of the institution, and the implementation of that philosophy by its employees.

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